

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 and 21 are currently pending, wherein it is proposed to amend claim 1 to include the subject matter of canceled claim 20.

In paragraph 5 of the final Office action ("Action"), the Examiner states that claim 20 contains allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants propose to cancel claim 20 and to amended independent claim 1 to include the allowable subject of claim 20.

In paragraph 2 of the Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-8, 11-16, 18, 19, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by International Patent Publication No. WO 00/38951 to Mathias et al. ("Mathias"). Although Applicants disagree with the Examiner's *new* interpretation of Mathias, in order to expedite allowance of the present application Applicants propose to amend independent claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of canceled claim 20. Therefore, entry of the above-identified amendment renders this rejection moot.

In paragraph 3 of the Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-7, 12, 15, 16, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 2000-112394 to Shimada ("Shimada"). Although Applicants disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of Shimada, in order to expedite allowance of the present application Applicants propose to amend independent claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of canceled claim 20. Therefore, entry of the above-identified amendment renders this rejection moot.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: May 17, 2007

Respectfully submitted,



By _____
D. Richard Anderson
Registration No.: 40,439
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant

DRA/WDT/jen